United Nations A/59/313

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 August 2004

Original: English

**Fifty-ninth session**
Item 100 of the provisional agenda*
**Advancement of women**

# Future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

## Report of the Secretary-General**

*Summary*

The present report provides details on the progress in revitalizing the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). As part of the revitalization process, an Executive Board mandated by Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/57 of 24 July 2003 was constituted and held its first session on 27 July 2004. Since the last report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly (A/58/417), INSTRAW has undertaken a number of important initiatives, including launching of a redesigned web site, strengthening cooperative arrangements with United Nations entities, expanding its research programme, intensifying its fund-raising campaign, and enhancing communications with Governments, civil society, academia and the private sector.

* A/59/150.

** Submission of the present report was delayed in order to reflect the deliberations of the first session of the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, held on 27 July 2004.

04-47480 (E) 210904

# Contents


| | | Paragraphs | Page |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | Introduction | 1–2 | 3 |
| II. | Commission on the Status of Women and the substantive session of 2004 of the Economic and Social Council | 3–4 | 3 |
| III. | First session of the Executive Board of INSTRAW | 5–12 | 3 |
| IV. | Framework of the strategic plan 2004-2007 | 13–14 | 5 |
| V. | Recent and planned activities aimed at the revitalization of the Institute | 15–30 | 5 |
| | A. Institutional development of INSTRAW | 15–20 | 5 |
| | B. Research | 21–25 | 6 |
| | C. Information and communication | 26 | 7 |
| | D. Capacity-building | 27–29 | 7 |
| | E. Networking | 30 | 8 |
| VI. | Management and staffing | 31–33 | 8 |
| VII. | Concluding remarks | 34–38 | 9 |

# I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 58/244 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly decided to continue to provide its full support to the current efforts to revitalize the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of that resolution. In its resolution 2003/57 of 24 July 2003, the Economic and Social Council decided to amend the statute of the Institute, including the establishment of an Executive Board of INSTRAW to replace the Board of Trustees; and also requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of Council resolution 2003/57.

2. The present report is submitted in response to the above requests of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. A report of the Secretary-General on the financial situation of INSTRAW as requested in paragraph 5 of Assembly resolution 58/244 and paragraph 8 of Assembly resolution 57/311 of 18 June 2003 will be submitted separately. Similarly, the report of the Institute to the Assembly requested in paragraph 7 of Assembly resolution 57/311 will be submitted once the programme of work and the budget of INSTRAW for 2005 have been considered and approved by the Executive Board in accordance with paragraph 3 (b) of article III of the revised Statute of INSTRAW (Council resolution 2003/57, annex).

# II. Commission on the Status of Women and the substantive session of 2004 of the Economic and Social Council

3. At its forty-eighth session, the Commission on the Status of Women heard a statement by the Director of INSTRAW and discussed the situation of the Institute. In its resolution 48/1 of 11 March 2004,[1] of which the Economic and Social Council took note at its substantive session of 2004 (see Council decision 2004/239 of 21 July 2004), the Commission noted the activities undertaken by the Director and invited Member States to make voluntary contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. In the same resolution, the Commission also called upon the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to continue to strengthen their support to the current efforts to revitalize INSTRAW.

4. At its substantive session in July 2004, the Economic and Social Council reviewed the situation of INSTRAW, in light of a briefing by the Director of the Institute and her report contained in the annex to document E/2004/66.

# III. First session of the Executive Board of INSTRAW

5. In its resolution 2003/57, the Economic and Social Council amended article III of the statute of the Institute in order to replace the Board of Trustees with an Executive Board. In accordance with article III of the revised INSTRAW Statute, the Board consists of two governmental representatives from each of the five regional groups of the United Nations, and the Director of INSTRAW, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, a representative of the host

country and a representative of each of the regional commissions of the Council serving as ex officio members of the Board.

6. On 24 June 2004, the Economic and Social Council constituted the Executive Board by electing two governmental representatives to fill two remaining vacancies. The Board now comprises the following members: Burkina Faso, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Romania and Spain.

7. The first session of the Executive Board of INSTRAW was convened at United Nations Headquarters on 27 July 2004. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, in his opening remarks, stated that the goal for INSTRAW was to regain its visibility and re-establish its status and credibility as a key institution for the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality within the United Nations system. He also emphasized the importance of coordination and collaboration within the United Nations system in the revitalization of INSTRAW and encouraged members of the Board to lead the fund-raising efforts for the Institute. Spain, which chaired the Working Group on the Future Operation of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, stressed the importance of the revised statute of INSTRAW which offers new opportunities for active participation by Member States in the revitalization of the Institute.

8. The Director of INSTRAW briefed the Executive Board on the ongoing activities of the Institute and presented a draft framework of the strategic plan 2004-2007 for the Board's consideration and approval.

9. The Executive Board considered and approved the framework of the strategic plan 2004-2007. It instructed the Director of INSTRAW to present the programme of activities and a budget proposal for 2005 at its next session, to be held in early October 2004.

10. The Board also considered issues related to the financial situation of INSTRAW. It noted that sufficient resources were available for the Institute to continue throughout 2004 and decided to further review the financial situation of the Institute at its next session. To facilitate the review, the Board requested, for the next meeting, a financial report on detailed expenditures, budget provisions, pledges and contributions received.

11. The Board took a number of organizational decisions. Spain was elected to the Presidency of the Board and El Salvador and the Philippines were elected as Vice-Presidents. One of the Vice-Presidents will also act as Rapporteur. Among other organizational decisions taken by the Board was the approval of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council as the interim rules of the Board. The Director was requested to prepare draft rules of procedure in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, and present the draft rules at the Board's next session.

12. The Board expressed its satisfaction at the launching of the revised web site of INSTRAW and at the efforts that had been undertaken for its revitalization.

# IV. Framework of the strategic plan 2004-2007

13. The framework of the strategic plan 2004-2007 endorsed by the Executive Board outlines the mission, overarching goals and strategies to guide the work of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in support of the agenda for gender equality and women's advancement. The strategic plan is based on the INSTRAW mandate as set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1998 (LX) of 12 May 1976 and Council decision 1984/124 of 24 March 1984 endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/122 of 14 December 1984. The strategic plan recognized that the mandate on which INSTRAW was founded had been augmented by successive Assembly and Council resolutions and decisions. In its paragraph 334, the Beijing Platform for Action[2] had called upon INSTRAW to identify priority types of research, strengthen national capacities to carry out women's studies and gender research, inter alia, on the status of the girl child, and develop networks of research institutions. In addressing ways to advance women's empowerment, in line with decisions and strategies agreed to at a series of major world conferences and summits and their follow-up, particularly the Millennium Summit, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", the Assembly, the Council and the Commission on the Status of Women had emphasized the role of INSTRAW as the only entity in the United Nations system devoted entirely to research, training and information on gender equality.

14. The strategic plan emphasized that the mission of INSTRAW is to serve as a major catalyst in gender initiatives, by promoting gender-related applied research, information-sharing and supporting capacity-building. INSTRAW is committed to continuing to work towards becoming a recognized leader in strategic and innovative approaches towards achieving gender equality and making a difference in women's lives by focusing on four strategic areas: applied research, information sharing and dissemination, capacity-building, and its own institutional development. The strategic plan outlines key programmatic areas for the future work of INSTRAW, specifically: migration/trafficking; reproductive rights; women's political participation, including women and peace; changing cultural patterns for gender equality; women's sexual and reproductive rights; mainstreaming of gender perspectives; and indigenous women.

# V. Recent and planned activities aimed at the revitalization of the Institute

## A. Institutional development of INSTRAW

15. The present section should be read in conjunction with the report of the Director of INSTRAW submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2004 (E/2004/66, annex).

16. During the reporting period, the Institute focused on reactivating contacts with stakeholders, strategic planning and preparation of a portfolio of projects, ongoing research, expansion and enhancement of the technical structure of the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS).

17. The efforts towards the revitalization of the Institute focused on building trust and commitment of stakeholders, through reactivating key contacts. The Institute undertook strategic planning, prepared a portfolio of outlines for projects in areas in which a positive contribution could be made and, after consultations with potential partners, proceeded to finalize those that had been positively received by both prospective donors and executing partners.

18. Fund-raising activities have been a priority and a central activity of the Director of the Institute. In addition to the contacts described in paragraph 15 of the Director's report (E/2004/66, annex), since May 2004, the Director of INSTRAW has undertaken a focused fund-raising campaign by visiting China, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Morocco and Spain where she held discussions with government representatives, parliamentarians, members of academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

19. Another major direction of the Director's activities during the reporting period was the strengthening of collaborative arrangements within the United Nations system, particularly on issues of gender mainstreaming. It is anticipated that the interaction of the Institute with the United Nations system will take various forms: the organization of parallel events during major conferences, preparation of joint position papers for preparatory sessions of those conferences, provision of advisory services to other United Nations entities, bringing officials forward as experts for seminars on issues of common interest, and a systematic dissemination to relevant entities of information on INSTRAW research. The Director continued consultations with a view to strengthening working relations with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (UNAIDS), the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

20. The Director represented INSTRAW at the Third Meeting of the Working Group on Gender Issues held at ITU headquarters from 30 June to 2 July 2004, and at the ninth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Mexico City from 10 to 12 June 2004.

## B. Research

21. Recently, INSTRAW has been promoting gender-related research in two thematic areas: financing for development and remittances. Other thematic areas where INSTRAW is planning to participate in joint research activities with other United Nations entities include trafficking in women, and women's contribution to international peace and security.

22. With regard to the issue of financing for development, INSTRAW has published a study, launched on 21 July 2004 during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, that analyses the outcome document of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,[3] from a gender

perspective. According to that study, the market liberalization policies that would underlie some of the Conference's recommended actions do not reflect a needed recognition of the adverse consequences and social costs for women. The study also argues that gender concerns and the adverse distributive consequences of those policies are not discussed or addressed appropriately in the outcome document.

23. The study calls upon Governments and international institutions to recognize the crucial role of the economic empowerment of women and their contributions in both market and non-market sectors of the economy, and offers strategies of action for Governments, and international and civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations. The study is available in English, French and Spanish. In respect of the issue of gender aspects of remittances, preparations for a conference are under consideration.

24. As regards other thematic areas, an occasional paper entitled "Overcoming the Gender Digital Divide: Understanding Information and Communication Technologies and their Potential for the Empowerment of Women"[4] has been posted on the web site in three official languages as well as widely distributed in printed form.

25. In collaboration with the Santo Domingo Field Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), INSTRAW has been working on updating a pilot project on trafficking in women. INSTRAW participated in a forum organized by a coalition of non-governmental organizations and Santo Domingo-based United Nations entities in July 2004 on the theme "La reforma penal: hacia la construcción del consenso social" (Penal code reform: towards the construction of a social consensus). The forum discussed the proposed reforms to the Dominican Penal Code and their possible impacts on Law 24-97 against Domestic and Sexual Violence, enacted in the Dominican Republic.

## C. Information and communication

26. The Institute also undertook an overhaul of its web site with a view to modernizing it, making it more user-friendly, giving it a well-defined niche, and complying with the strategic goal of sharing and dissemination of information. The substantially revised site is expected to facilitate networking and to be a central instrument for capacity-building and cooperative research. In particular, the new web site strengthens communications with government agencies, the United Nations system, civil society, academia and the private sector, and will be instrumental in allowing INSTRAW to operate as a clearing house for gender-related research and information. The Institute launched its redesigned web site on 22 July 2004 at an Economic and Social Council side event.

## D. Capacity-building

27. The holding of virtual seminars on gender and remittances and financing for development is planned to be held in the second half of 2004. Identification of opportunities available for further online training and capacity-building will be pursued.

28. Proposals for two projects, one on connectivity and the other on social cohesion, are also being prepared.

29. INSTRAW continues to assist women's non-governmental organizations, academia and other institutions in the Dominican Republic that work on gender issues. This has included co-sponsoring the publication of a compilation of their works on gender and communication entitled *Un periodismo que refleje el mundo*.

### E. Networking

30. Within the context of enhancing the Institute's networking capacity, further assessment of GAINS was undertaken by identifying the types of institutions working with INSTRAW. The existing networks will be restructured into more feasible interactive arrangements within the United Nations system and civil society in order to facilitate the exchange of information and promote best practices.

## VI. Management and staffing

31. The work of the Institute is carried out with a small staff: a Director (D-2) appointed on 4 December 2003, a Social Affairs Officer (P-3), an Associate Social Affairs Officer (P-2), an Administrative Officer and five General Service staff members. All Professional and General Service posts have been filled. The functions of the former P-2 post of Associate Social Affairs Officer were redefined to provide INSTRAW with expertise in the fields of information and communication technologies (ICT). The post has been filled since 31 May 2004. Under the sponsorship of the United Nations Volunteers Programme, the Institute received the support of a volunteer, assigned to INSTRAW until 30 September 2004, with expertise in the fields of ICT and gender. INSTRAW also retains a webmaster and a systems administrator to secure the logistic and technical support required for the overhauling of the web site, thereby eliminating continuous reliance on the services of a consultant.

32. The Institute's internship programme facilitates bringing young research interns from all over the world to work at INSTRAW on gender issues. During the reporting period, under the internship programme, four interns conducted research on new and emerging issues and assisted the staff in the preparation and translation of web-site content. INSTRAW will continue to seek partnerships, including financial support, with Governments and academia so as to increase the contribution of interns to the work of the Institute.

33. Substantial efforts have been made to upgrade and strengthen the data management, communication and networking capacities of the Institute. The Institute's hardware has been upgraded, its access to the Internet has been improved, and its information back-up and management systems are being enhanced to increase the capacity of INSTRAW for networking services. The Institute's internal archives for 2004 have been digitized to facilitate internal information back-up, storage and sharing. Efforts are under way to digitize archives for the period 2000-2003, and to standardize the process of backing up information. The software used by the Institute has been updated and reinstalled to improve information management and access to resources necessary to maintain the presence of INSTRAW on the Web. The security of the Institute's networking is being increased through the use of security and anti-virus software, an increase in the Institute's bandwidth for Internet access, and the development and implementation of a set of standards and guidelines for the coordination of the Institute's local area network (LAN).

## VII. Concluding remarks

34. During the past year, the constitution of the Executive Board of INSTRAW and the appointment of the Director were major contributing factors to the revitalization of INSTRAW. In accordance with the revised INSTRAW statute, the Executive Board plays a vital role, including the formulation of policies for activities of INSTRAW, and approval of its work programme and budget, as well as reporting to the Economic and Social Council and, where appropriate, to the General Assembly. At its first session, held on 27 July 2004, the Board took a number of important decisions, including the approval of the framework of the strategic plan of INSTRAW. On the basis of the strategic plan, INSTRAW will prepare its programme of work and budgetary requirements for 2005, for consideration by the Board in October 2004.

35. The Director of INSTRAW, ably assisted by the staff of the Institute, undertook a number of important strategic initiatives, including the redesign of the INSTRAW web site, the strengthening of cooperative arrangements with United Nations entities, the expansion of its research programme, the intensification of its fund-raising campaign, the enhancement of communications with government agencies, civil society, academia and the private sector, and the strengthening of training, capacity-building and outreach activities.

36. With the preparation of the programme of work and the related budget, as well as the portfolio of projects, the first phase of the revitalization of the Institute, focusing on strategic planning and establishment of goals, principles, critical areas and themes, will be completed.

37. The full implementation and success of the revitalization process of INSTRAW are dependent on the broad support of Governments, including the availability of the necessary financial resources for the operation of INSTRAW. The implementation of the Institute's work programme and strategic plan may contribute to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration[5] and Platform for Action[2] and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.[6]

38. In conclusion, the Secretary-General would like to thank all those involved in the revitalization process of INSTRAW. It is hoped that the Institute's future activities will receive the necessary political and financial support.

*Notes*

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 7* (E/2004/27), chap. I, sect. C.

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex).

[4] INSTRAW Research Paper Series, No. 1 (April 2003).

[5] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[6] General Assembly resolutions S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.